(c) whether it is a fact that the country's shipping capacity has been stagnant for a decade or more and the share of Cargo carried by Indian Bottoms in overseas trade has in long term decline; and

(d) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to improve this grim situation?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) and (b) The recommendations of the Shipping Policy Committee are under examination in the Government.

(c) and (d) No, Sir, the Indian tonnage has grown from 5.8 million Gross Registered Tonnes as on 1.1.1987 to 7.05 million Gross Registered Tonnes as on 1.1.1997. The cargo carried by Indian lines has also increased from 20.16 Million Tonnes in 1985-86 to 50.79 Million Tonnes in 1996-97 (provisional).

National Highways

102. SHRI MOHINDAR SINGH KALYAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the length of National Highways in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar; and

(b) the central financial assistance provided to these States for the maintenance of National Highways during the last three years and proposed to be provided during 1997-98?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) and (b) The length of National Highways in the States and the Central financial assistance during the last three years and proposed during 1997-98 is as under:

(Maintenance & Repair)

State	Length (in Kms)	Allocation (Rs. in lakhs) 1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Punjab	892	736.97	770.92	1182.13	1191.75
Uttar Pradesh	2733	2065.48	2529.94	337.40	3469.19
Orissa	1649	1186.50	1447.83	1981.73	1872.00
Rajasthan	2931	1810.83	1860.72	2669.08	2381.71
Madhya Pradesh	2946	1696.01	1971.52	3176.72	2988.78
Bihar	2347	1472.53	1763.95	2193.95	2659.77

Four lane road between Hosur and Krishnagiri

103. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to construct a four lane road between Hosur and Krishnagiri in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the action taken in this regard; and

(c) what are the total National Highway projects being undertaken involving Tamil Nadu and their present status?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) and (b) yes, Sir. National Highways Authority of India is taking up the 4 laning of NH-7, from Hosur to Krishnagiri in Tamil Nadu with private sectors' participation. 7 firms have been prequalified in short listing. Process of acquisition of land is underway.

(c) Annual Plan 1997-98 provides for 13 number of works. Moreover, National Highways Authority of India is also

undertaking 9 projects on Build, Operate and Transfer basis.

These are at different stages of progress.

Sethu Samuthiram Project

104. SHRI S. MUTHU MANI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have ordered the Central Eco-Engineering Research Institute to conduct a fresh study on the Sethu Samuthiram Project;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor and what is Government's view on the earlier report; and

(c) what is the time limit given to the said institute to submit its final report on the Project?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) Yes Sir. The Ministry has decided to get the environment & feasibility study conducted for the Sethu Samundram Canal Project.

(b) The earlier study was conducted in 1981—83. It was basically a techno-economic feasibility study and did not address the environment issues. In view of the time lag, technological changes in dredging and environmental issues, the Ministry has decided to go ahead with a fresh environmental and feasibility study.

(c) The report on initial environmental examination is likely to be available by middle of next year.

Private investment in ports

105. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a final decision to permit private participation in establishing and maintenance of ports in the country;

(b) if so, the names of the ports which have so far been identified;

(c) the number of ports renovated/maintained/improved together with the number of ports where the work is in progress by such participation or where work is in progress;

(d) what is the quantum of private investment in this work; and

(e) as a support of export have any private investments factually started in the 20-30 highway on BOT system as reported and by when they are expected to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) and (b) yes, Sir. All 11 Major Ports have been identified for private sector participation in defined areas of port activity.

(c) and (d) A list of approved projects for private sector participation is enclosed at State (*See* below).

(e) No, Sir.

Statement

List of approved private sector participation projects

Leasing of existing berths/assets of the port

1. Leasing of berths No. 6 at Kandla Port to M/s. Geepee Corporation Limited, Bangkok for handling bulk and break bulk cargoes.

2. Leasing of berths at Haldia Dock Complex to Steel Authority of India Limited and TISCO.

3. Leasing of JD-1 berth at Madras Port.

4. Leasing of JD-5 berth at Madras Port.

Creation of storage facilities/warehouses

5. Leasing of land to M/s. SPIC for storage and despatch of LPG in Tuticorin Port.

6. Leasing of land to M/s. Suraj Agro Private Limited at Madras Port for